



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
www.ridoe.net

Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

WOONSOCKET

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

February 18, 2005



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF REGENTS
FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

James A. DiPrete, Chairman

Jo Eva Gaines, Vice Chair

Colleen Callahan, Secretary

Frank Caprio

Representative Paul W. Crowley

Sue P. Duff

Senator Hanna M. Gallo

Gary E. Grove

Patrick A. Guida

Mario A. Mancieri

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

Peter McWalters, Commissioner

The Board of Regents does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

For information about SALT, please contact:

Rick Richards

401-222-4600, x 2194

or

salt@ridoe.net.

1. INTRODUCTION	1
<i>THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>SOURCES OF EVIDENCE</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>USING THE REPORT.....</i>	<i>2</i>
2. PROFILE OF CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	4
3. PORTRAIT OF CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT.....	6
4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING	7
<i>CONCLUSIONS.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>IMPORTANT THEMATIC FINDINGS IN STUDENT LEARNING</i>	<i>8</i>
5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING	9
<i>CONCLUSIONS.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>COMMENDATIONS FOR CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WOONSOCKET SCHOOL DISTRICT.....</i>	<i>11</i>
6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING	12
<i>CONCLUSIONS.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>COMMENDATIONS FOR CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOONSOCKET SCHOOL DISTRICT.....</i>	<i>15</i>
7. FINAL ADVICE TO CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	16
ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT	17
REPORT APPENDIX	19
<i>SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THIS REPORT.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR CITIZENS' MEMORIAL SCHOOL</i>	<i>20</i>
THE CITIZENS' MEMORIAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM	24
MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM.....	26
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM.....	27

1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Citizens' Memorial Elementary School from February 14-18, 2005.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

- ◆ *How well do students learn at Citizens' Memorial Elementary School?*
- ◆ *How well does the teaching at Citizens' Memorial Elementary School affect learning?*
- ◆ *How well does Citizens' Memorial Elementary School support learning and teaching?*

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Citizens' Memorial Elementary School distinct.

The team did not compare this school to any other school.

When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.

The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2nd Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at www.Catalpa.org. Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or ride0782@ride.ri.net for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 111 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once. Team members had conversations with various faculty and staff members for over 34 hours.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 36 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

- ◆ *Important enough to include in the report*
- ◆ *Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit*
- ◆ *Set in the present, and*
- ◆ *Contains the judgment of the team*

Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Citizens' Memorial Elementary School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the Woonsocket School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The Woonsocket School district, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Citizens' Memorial Elementary School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

2. PROFILE OF CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Located in urban Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Citizens' Memorial Elementary School serves students from a multi-ethnic population from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Citizens' is located in an area that has one of the highest child neglect and abuse rates in the state. The original school, named for the citizens of Woonsocket who served in World War II, opened in 1958 for students in kindergarten through grade six. Throughout the years, Citizens' has restructured its grade levels many times. A ten-room addition was constructed on the building in 2000. When Pothier Elementary School was built in 2001, Citizens' became a school for students in grades three through five. In 2003, grade two students were added.

Of the 346 students, 48% are white, 38% are Hispanic, eight percent are black, six percent are Asian and less than one percent is Native American. Eighty-three percent of the students receive free or reduced price lunch; 11% receive ESL services; 24% have IEP's; and 21% receive daily reading services. Citizens' Memorial is a Title I Schoolwide school.

Citizens' has one administrator, who was officially appointed in November 2004. Four different administrators have served the school during the past five years. The faculty and staff consist of seventeen full-time classroom teachers, two ESL resource teachers—one full-time and one part-time—two full-time reading specialists, two special education resource teachers—one full-time and one part-time—and a Literacy trainer. Encore teachers consist of a music teacher, an art teacher, a physical education teacher, a technology teacher and three part-time librarians. The school also has a full-time T.I.M.E. teacher (Teacher in Multiple Environments), a speech and language pathologist, a guidance counselor, a school nurse teacher, a psychologist, a part-time physical therapist, a part-time social worker, a part-time occupational therapist and a secretary. Two full-time paraprofessionals, two Americorps workers—one full-time and one part-time—three custodians—one part-time and two full-time—three full-time Sodexo staff and four lunch monitors complete the staff.

Literacy is a major focus at Citizens' Memorial. Classroom teachers have developed leveled classroom libraries. Students in every classroom spend at least two hours daily on literacy. Further, both the administrator and teachers have received training in the "Principles of Learning" from the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. Every classroom focuses on Clear Expectations™, Accountable Talk™, and Academic Rigor™. The school regularly conducts both formal and informal Learning Walks™. The majority of the staff participates in study inquiry groups, including Readers' Workshop, Differentiated Instruction/ESL and Morning Meeting. They regularly analyze student work, as well as participate in the Integrated Administrative Council, Teacher Support Team, Book Fairs, RIF Challenge, Feinstein Programs and the Nature Trail Project.

Students are an integral part of the school community. Members of the Student Senate take part in school decision-making. Students also participate in school spirit days, student of the month activities, student/parent lunches, safety patrol, peer mediation and the school improvement team.

Many programs are in place to address the diverse needs of students. The Institute for Non-Violence conducts student workshops every Tuesday and Thursday. The T.I.M.E. teacher facilitates a before-school program for at-risk students and maintains a parent information corner. A limited number of parents read to classes, as well as participate in PTO and the Principal Coffee Hours. Citizens' Memorial has created partnerships with InstaCare, CVS and Walmart to bring additional money and materials into the school.

3. PORTRAIT OF CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Citizens' Memorial Elementary School is located in the urban community of Woonsocket, Rhode Island. The surrounding neighborhood is low-income housing. Upon entering the school, a spirit of joy and "rebirth" permeates the air, a distinct difference from the school climate of the previous year. Smiles are evident as teachers and students from diverse cultures and socio-economic backgrounds go about their daily routines.

Due to an excessive number of administrative changes during the past five years, most people at Citizens' Elementary perceived that the school has been floundering with no direction or common vision. However, a sense of change and renewal is now evident throughout the school. In stark contrast to last year, the climate is positive and caring, and there is a true sense of community. Hallways have been freshly painted with colorful murals, and the walls are filled with inspirational, motivational signs. A new principal is now at the helm. Working with her teachers, she is setting a course to improve student learning and holds demanding and high expectations for both teachers and students.

What this learning community has accomplished in five short months is extraordinary. The new principal empowers all members of the school to participate in school decision-making. A fair, consistent discipline policy clearly outlines the expectations for student behavior. Discipline is administered swiftly and justly. Teachers feel supported by the principal and know that she will follow through. Numerous safety issues at the school have been addressed. Students and parents know that Citizens' is a safe place where everyone can learn.

Dedicated teachers and support staff willingly go beyond their contractual obligations to volunteer their time and resources. They meet regularly and frequently to learn new instructional practices. They are committed to improving student learning and determined to reverse their "School of Choice" classification.

While many new instructional initiatives are underway here, their positive effect on student achievement has yet to be realized. The academic and social needs of these students present great challenges to the school. Students find that reading, writing and math are difficult. Student motivation is low, and many lack confidence in their ability to achieve. Much work needs to be done before teachers become proficient in the new instructional approaches.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Most students at Citizens' Memorial read below grade level. Many struggle to understand what they read. While some say they love to read, others say that reading is boring. Students select books to read that are based on their interests, as well as on their reading levels; they judge their reading ability by the number of books they read, rather than by how well they understand what they read. Students know how to identify basic story elements, make predictions, use picture clues and connect what they read to their personal experiences. However, far too many lack critical thinking skills; few know how to infer and interpret text. Students do not know how to apply reading strategies independently while they read. They rely on their teachers to tell them what to do. Teachers report that students' reading habits do not carry over to their homes, which decreases the amount of time they spend practicing their reading skills. Student performance on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries supports these findings. While 53% achieved or exceeded the standard in basic reading understanding, only 38% achieved or exceeded the standard in analysis and interpretation. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Many students struggle to write effectively and often follow a prescriptive format. As a result, student writing is often mechanical. The format of student writing is similar from grade to grade and shows little progression in writing quality. Most of their writing includes only the minimum requirements as stated in the criteria charts. Using graphic organizers, students know how to develop topic sentences and list supporting details to guide their writing. They brainstorm ideas, write rough drafts, peer edit and conference with their teachers. However, most student writing lacks voice, descriptive details and originality. While students write daily, many do not write for extended periods of time or for a variety of purposes. Students share their writing for peer editing, but they rarely share it as a group, which limits their ability to connect what they write to the purpose of the writing lesson. Fifty-seven percent of the students achieved or exceeded the standard on the writing effectiveness subtest of the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination and 14% achieved or exceeded the standard on the 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment. *(following students, observing classes, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments and classroom portfolios, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results)*

Students are not proficient problem solvers. They understand basic math, but their computation skills are often below their appropriate grade levels. Students spend little time developing more advanced skills, which prevents them from learning how to solve more complex problems. When solving math problems, students underline important words, clarify meanings and identify key information only with the guidance of their teachers and classroom supports. They know how to use a limited number of problem solving strategies, but only a few can independently apply these strategies. When students explain their solutions to problems, they use a limited math vocabulary that does reflect an understanding of the underlying math concepts. Students rarely extend their knowledge of math beyond the minimum of what their teachers expect, and they rarely discuss why they chose a particular strategy to solve a problem. Eighty-five percent of the students did not achieve the standard on the math concepts subtest and 86% did not achieve the standard on the problem-solving subtest of the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, classroom textbooks, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, grade level expectations)*

Students at Citizens' Memorial report that school is a happier place this year and that the principal allows them to do more things. However, a spark for learning is just beginning to be ignited. Most merely work to please their teachers, listen politely and respect their peers. They are not afraid to make mistakes or ask for help. But, many are passive learners who often become restless during instruction. Students strive to meet specific task criteria and are willing to improve their work, but they rarely challenge themselves to exceed expectations. Some actively participate in the School Senate and the school improvement team; they are part of the decision-making process. These students say they feel important and that people really listen to them. But, many students are compliant learners who lack self-confidence. In addition, students have problems outside of school that often interfere with their learning in school. The high student mobility rate frequently disrupts the continuity of learning and instruction. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students and parents, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Rely on teacher direction*
- ◆ *Are not independent learners who try to exceed the basic expectations*
- ◆ *Are not critical thinkers*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Teachers at Citizens' Memorial are open-minded, dedicated professionals. They are passionate about their students, their school and their learning community. District and school administrators and the SALT team concur that they are willing to try new methods and approaches despite the numerous obstacles that exist. They work together as a team and model the attributes of expert learners to their students. They are motivated, persist in their learning and are proud of their work and take ownership of it. All take part in the decision-making process. Teachers volunteer for numerous workshops, even on Saturdays, to improve their instructional practices. A Literacy-trainer shares her expertise with the teachers. She proudly reports that an increasing number of teachers are requesting her help to improve their instructional practices. Teachers are making every effort to improve student learning. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities, Citizens' Memorial Self-Study, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Not all teachers effectively differentiate their reading instruction. With the help of a Literacy trainer, teachers are just beginning to implement instructional practices that address the diverse reading needs of their students. Consequently, their students' levels of proficiency differ greatly. Much of their instruction is teacher-centered. Students have little time to practice application of skills and depend on their teachers to tell them what to do. While all teachers use a variety of tools, such as word walls, criteria charts, leveled classroom libraries and anchor papers, to guide their instruction and support student learning, not all use these tools appropriately or effectively. As a result, only a few students in every classroom know how to use these tools to improve their reading. The questions many teachers ask students focus mainly on the recall of literal level facts; they rarely stretch their students to use their critical thinking skills. Students have few opportunities to infer and interpret text. While all teachers give DRA's (Diagnostic Reading Assessments), many are just learning to score and interpret this data accurately to inform their instruction. As a result, some students do not read books at an appropriate independent comprehension level. Some students are bored, and others are frustrated. Few students know how to read critically. Not all teachers fully understand the components of comprehensive literacy. Few push their students beyond meeting the basic expectations. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, school and administrators, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, classroom textbooks, 2004 SALT Survey report, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

This inconsistent pattern of teaching continues with the instruction of writing. Only a few teachers use the approach of the Writers' Workshop to instruct writing in their classrooms. In these few classrooms, students develop writing traits to produce quality writing. In these classrooms teachers encourage students to include descriptive details, voice and creativity. However, in most classrooms the teaching of writing is often restricted to the templates of the *LINKS Metacognitive Strategies* program or a "four-square" model. These templates help students organize their work, but many teachers do not teach students to go beyond that model or provide students with enough time to develop their work. As a result, students produce the same level of writing from grade-to-grade, and their writing often lacks originality and voice. While teachers do demonstrate writing lessons, they provide few opportunities for students to show how they include specific writing traits in their work. As a result, students often miss the point of the mini-lessons. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, parents, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, Citizens' Memorial Elementary School Self Study, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Not all teachers effectively instruct students in math. Few use questioning techniques that will deepen their students' understanding of math concepts. Many want more training in how to do this. The Citizens' Memorial self study identifies the need for more academic rigor, and the SALT team concurs. Currently, teachers focus on teaching basic computation skills, but many of these skills are often below grade level. Teacher-centered math lessons prevent students from exploring math concepts and inhibit their independent practice of math skills. Many teach their students to use rubrics, criteria charts and the Problem Solver steps to guide their learning, but not all teachers hold their students accountable to the same high expectations for success. Some are satisfied with correct answers on worksheets while others require students to defend their thinking to the class. These inconsistent instructional practices and expectations broaden equity gaps in student performance. The TIME teacher and the Americorps Crusaders reinforce problem-solving skills in programs held before and after school. Reading teachers and the TIME teacher work in classrooms to support students in their math comprehension. Despite these supports, students still struggle with problem solving. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, Citizens' Memorial Self-Study, classroom textbooks, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Commendations for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

Dedicated, hard-working professionals

Commitment to improve student learning

Spirit of teamwork

Recommendations for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

Develop a coherent understanding and implementation of the workshop model for reading, writing and math. Hold all students accountable to the same high expectations.

Increase differentiated instruction in reading, writing and math. Continue professional development in these areas.

Develop questioning techniques and instructional practices to promote critical thinking skills.

Reduce teacher-centered lessons, and increase opportunities for active student learning. Promote independent thinking.

Extend the present writing model to include student voice and originality. Increase the variety of writing and reading genres.

Increase opportunities for students to share and celebrate their work.

Encourage students to explore math concepts, and provide adequate time for them to do that. Increase opportunities for them to share and justify their solutions.

Recommendations for the Woonsocket School District

Follow through with the pilot comprehensive math program. Find ways to fund a math trainer.

Continue to support teachers, the Literacy trainer and the principal in their professional development efforts in reading, writing and math.

Continue Learning Walks to ensure consistent, rigorous instructional practices. Oversee the implementation of research-based instruction.

Continue to support the use of the TIME teacher, the Literacy trainer and the reading teachers.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

The administrator, staff, students and parents of Citizens' Memorial create an extraordinary learning team. Their pride and sense of ownership is overwhelmingly obvious. While the challenges are numerous, teachers charge ahead under the leadership of their new principal. The principal proudly states that "she is the school's quarterback and without her team she could not win the game." All stakeholders share a common vision and are part of the decision-making team. Students actively participate in the Student Senate. Teachers from every grade level participate in monthly Integrated Council meetings to facilitate communication throughout the school. The majority of teachers are active members of the school improvement team. Monthly Principal Coffee Hours facilitate home-school communication. The strong, responsive relationship between the Woonsocket Police Department and the school diminishes many safety issues. All of these factors contribute to the improved morale, positive school climate and the spirit of teamwork that is moving Citizens' Memorial forward. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, school administrator, reviewing school improvement plan, Citizens' Memorial Self-Study, 2004 SALT Survey report, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

This spirit of community builds under the leadership of the new energetic, passionate principal of Citizens' Memorial. She sets high goals for herself and the entire learning community. Teachers say she supports them and backs them up. Students say she is nice, but strict. District administrators boast about the numerous positive changes that have occurred during her brief five-month tenure here. Parents feel welcome. Her enthusiasm and determination inspires change and unites the school. She observes and participates in the classroom instruction. She knows the names of all students, anticipates problems before they occur and is open to suggestions. The school improvement team, parents, the Woonsocket police detectives and the SALT team all agree that the principal's positive "together we can do it" attitude empowers the school to improve. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, 2004 SALT Survey report, Citizens' Memorial Self-Study)*

Special education students receive instruction and support in a variety of settings, including two self-contained classrooms. They receive resource support both inside and outside the regular education classrooms. However, teachers have inconsistent expectations for student achievement. The academic rigor differs significantly between the two self-contained special education classrooms. The SALT team recognizes and commends the numerous personnel who address critical student needs. A social worker, school psychologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech therapist and guidance counselor work collaboratively with the classroom teachers. Yet the present schedule limits the time special education teachers can meet with the regular education classroom teachers. This restriction in scheduling limits these teachers' ability to align, discuss and coordinate the curriculum, as well as to develop the same consistent high expectations for their students. Despite the fact that students with disabilities improved their English Language Arts scores on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examinations and were placed in the "safe harbor" category, an equity gap continues to exist in math and English Language Arts. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, parents and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, the 2004 Rhode Island School Report Card, reviewing district and school policies and practices, Citizens' Memorial Self-Study)*

Similarly, English Language Learners receive instruction and support in a variety of settings, but not all of these provide adequate support for these learners. There are three levels of ELL students—beginner, intermediate and advanced. The beginner and intermediate students receive instruction in reading and writing from an ESL certified teacher in a "pullout setting." Students in this setting learn well. They develop language fluency and understanding. They work in small groups using a variety of visual and auditory supports to develop proficient English language skills. There are high expectations for student achievement in this group. However, these students are lost when they return to the regular education classrooms. Not many classrooms provide them with sufficient support. Teachers recognize this problem and say they need help supporting ELL, as well as "Culturally and Linguistically Diverse," students in their classrooms. They are just beginning to receive professional development and guidance during their weekly study group meetings to address the needs of these students. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, Citizens' Self-Study, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers)*

Very few parents are actively involved at Citizens' Memorial Elementary School. The Salt Survey shows that only 10% of the parents attend PTO meetings and only 38% attend special events involving their children. Ongoing school and district efforts provide numerous activities in which parents can participate. The monthly Coffee Hours offer opportunities for parents to meet with the principal and voice their concerns, but parent attendance is low. The TIME teacher organizes parent workshops, surveys parent needs and notifies parents about activities in both Spanish and English, but parent participation is minimal. While this has been a problem for a number of years, teachers and parents report there has been a slight increase in parent participation. Parents report a desire to hold parent workshops at Citizens', rather than at other schools in the district. The school and the district recognize these problems and continue to explore ways to increase parent outreach. *(observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, parents, school and district administrators, 2004 SALT Survey report, talking with teachers, Citizens' Memorial Self-Study)*

The amount and level of professional development opportunities offered by the Woonsocket School Department is commendable. In addition, Citizens' Memorial offers various workshops tailored to the particular needs of the school. Information gathered from professional development audits and teacher surveys guides the selection of these offerings. Teachers select workshops based upon their individual needs. The Literacy trainer provides professional development to teachers based upon their needs and the needs of the school. School and district administrators, as well as the school improvement team, say that teachers at Citizens' are open to improvement and are willing to improve. While the teacher participation rate is high, not all teachers have received training in each of the research-based initiatives stated in the school improvement plan. As a result, not all teachers are using the new instructional methods or effectively implementing them. *(meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district strategic plan, Citizens' Self-Study, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Commendations for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

Shared common vision

Strong, supportive leadership

Community of learners

Differentiated, school-based professional development

Recommendations for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

Schedule time during the school day for special education and regular education teachers to plan and collaborate and to increase the consistency in the programs they offer and what they expect of their students.

Increase support for ELL students in regular education classrooms. Provide professional development in how to support ELL students within the regular education classrooms.

Train all teachers in differentiated instruction and the implementation of Reading, Writing and Math Workshops. Support the implementation of this instruction, and monitor the effectiveness of these programs.

Continue parental outreach, and offer parents site-based workshops.

Continue to develop a strong, safe learning environment.

Recommendations for Woonsocket School District

Continue to fund professional development in reading, writing and math.

Continue to support efforts for increased parent involvement

7. FINAL ADVICE TO CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Citizens' Memorial Elementary School is a school that is on the move. The SALT Team applauds your hard work and perseverance. Your honest self-study reflects your willingness to improve. Your dedication to your students is commendable.

You are definitely on the right track and well positioned to improve student learning. The teachers, principal and district administrators need to continue to advance their valiant efforts to support students by ensuring that all teachers develop expertise in the new and more effective instructional methods and programs. Develop consistent, high expectations for all of your students and hold them accountable. Reduce teacher-centered lessons to allow students to become independent, self-directed learners. Don't teach your students only what to learn but teach them how to learn. They are ready for the challenge.

We acknowledge the many obstacles you and your students face each day. What you have achieved in five short months is amazing! Just think about what you can accomplish in the next three years. Continue to attend professional development and use the expertise that already exists on your staff to further improve your instructional practices. Extend your collaboration to include special education and ELL classes. Seek ways to motivate all of your students to do their personal best.

The SALT Team urges you to use the conclusions and recommendations in this report to guide your next steps. Please invite us back. We have confidence in your ability to succeed.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

February 18, 2005

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports*. (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1st edition*.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.

The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
- observation of a portion of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD
Catalpa Ltd.
March 17, 2005

REPORT APPENDIX

Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Citizens' Memorial Elementary School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following sources of evidence:

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 7 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
 - teachers*
 - school improvement team*
 - school and district administrators*
 - students*
 - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
 - district and school policies and practices*
 - records of professional development activities*
 - classroom assessments*
 - school improvement plan for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School*
 - district strategic plan*
 - 2003 SALT Survey report*
 - classroom textbooks*
 - 2003 Information Works!*
 - 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*
 - 2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

School and District Report Cards

Citizens' Memorial Self-Study

Classroom portfolios

Grade level expectations

Technology binder

WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards

Woonsocket CREST documents

Framework for teaching and learning, Woonsocket School Department

Contract Between the School Committee of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode

Island and the Woonsocket Teachers' Guild Local #951, American

Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO, July 1, 2003-June 30, 2006

State Assessment Results for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

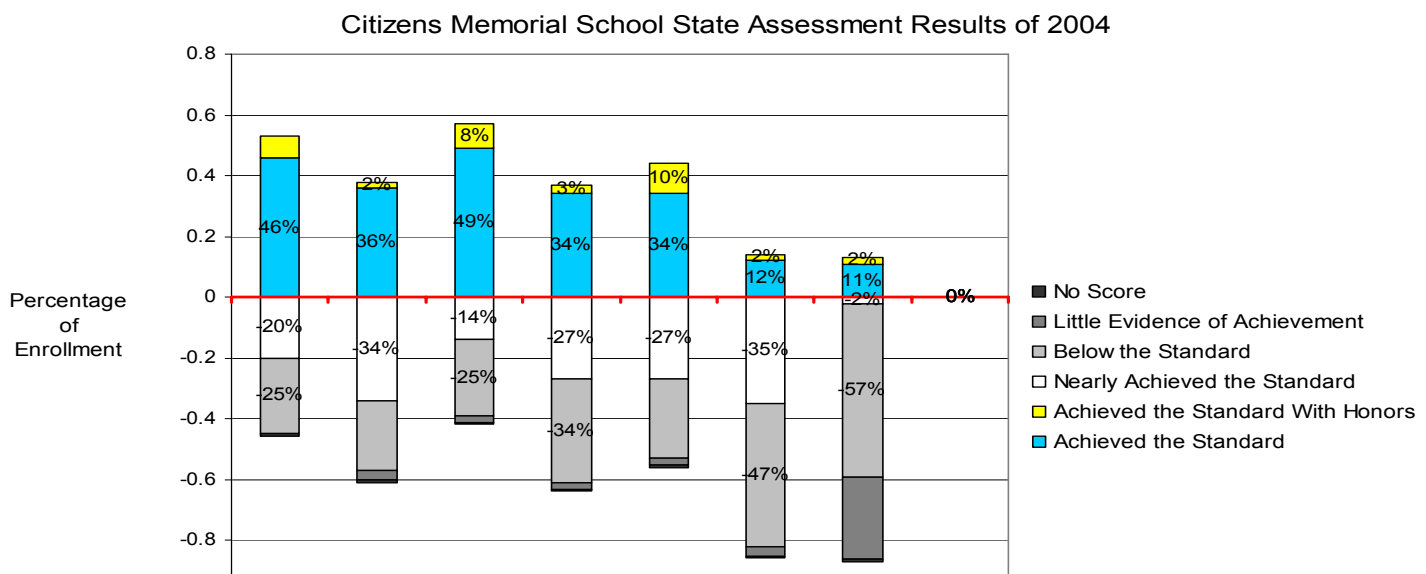
This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

- ◆ *against performance standards;*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school;*
- ◆ *and over time.*

RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*.

Table1. 2003-2004 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments

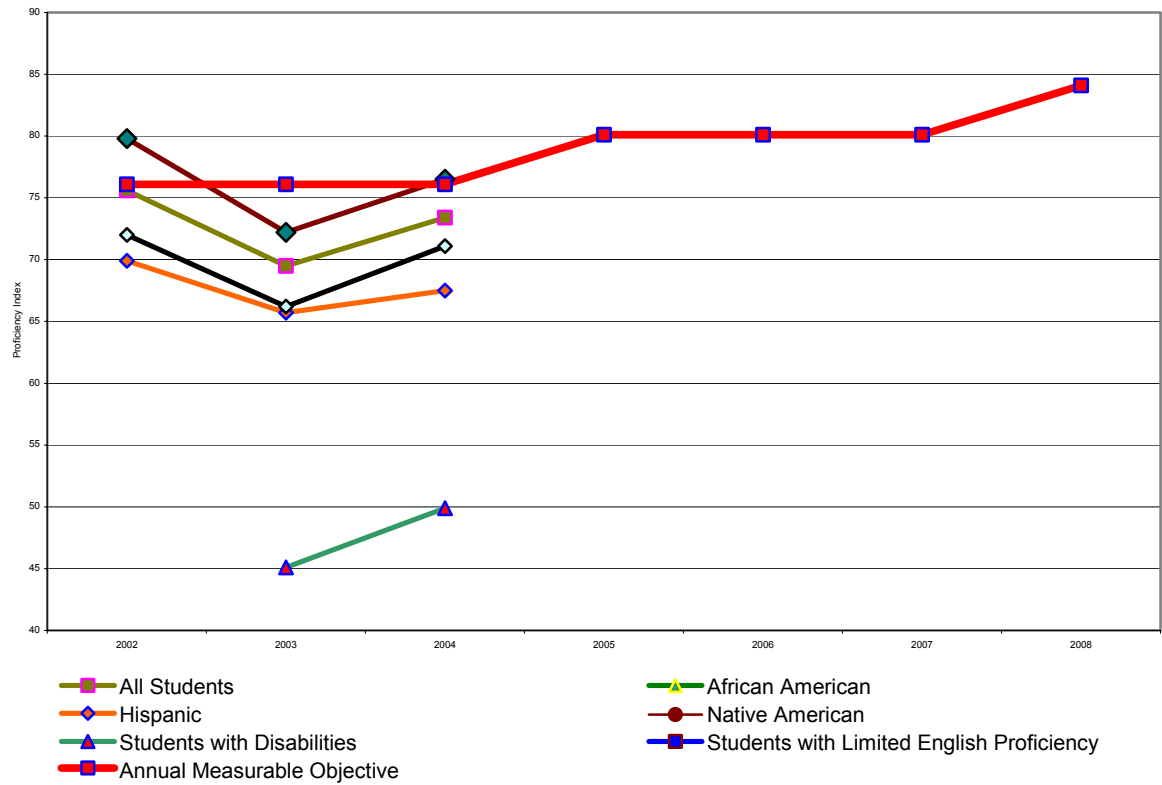


RESULTS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

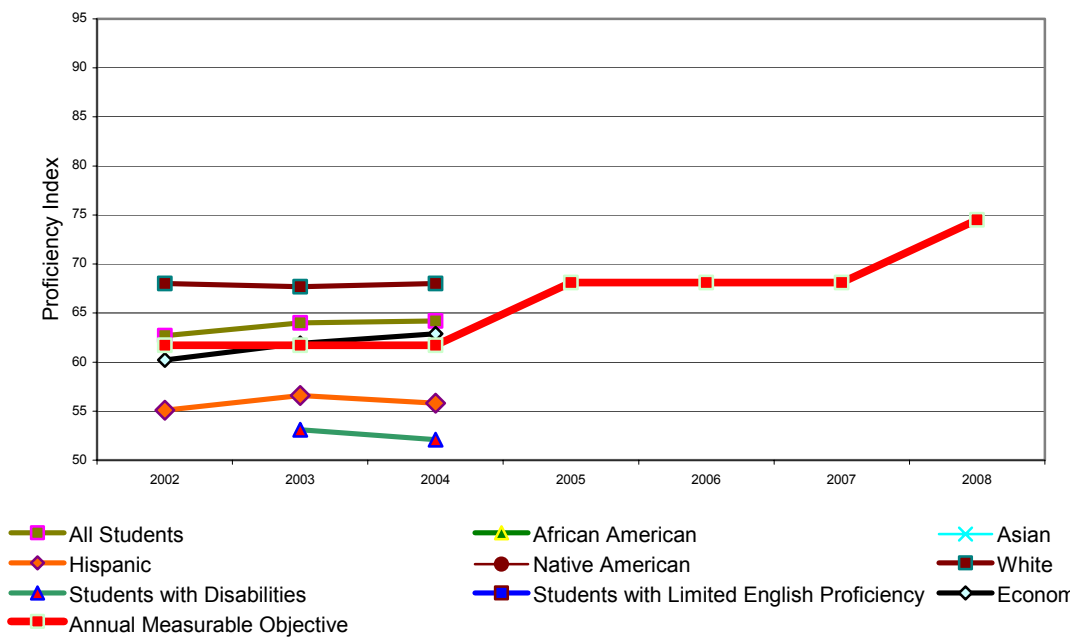
An important way to display student results is across different groups of students with different characteristics who are in the school. This display showing targets and index scores, in accordance with the No Child Left Behind federal legislation creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. Any student group whose index scores do not meet the targets set by RIDE require additional attention to close its performance gap.

Table 2 2003-2004 Student Results across Subgroups

Annual Proficiency, Citizens Memorial Elementary School, ELA, Gr. 4



Annual Proficiency, Citizens Memorial Elementary School, Gr. 4 Math



REPORT CARD FOR CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This Report Card show the performance of Citizens' Memorial Elementary School compared to the school's annual measurable objectives (AMO).

These report card scores describe Citizens' Memorial Elementary School as a school in need of improvement, insufficient progress.

Table 4. Report Card for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School

2004 Rhode Island School Report Card

RI SCHOOL: **CITIZENS MEMORIAL SCHOOL**

RI DISTRICT: **WOONSOCKET**

GRADE: **04**

INDEX PROFICIENCY SCORE, 2002-04	ENGLISH LANG. ARTS TARGET SCORE: 76.1				MATHEMATICS TARGET SCORE: 61.7			
STUDENT GROUP	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
All Students	73.4	YES††	79.9	86.1	64.2	YES	69.3	77.5
African Americans	*	YES	74.7	77.8	*	YES	66.3	65.9
Asian	*	YES	81.7	84.5	*	YES	71.6	77.1
Hispanic	67.5	YES†	71.5	75.8	55.8	NO	64.2	65.8
Native Americans	*	YES	*	83.9	*	YES	*	73
White	76.5	YES	80.4	88.5	68	YES	71.4	82
Students with Disabilities	49.9	YES†	60.8	69.5	52.1	NO	58.9	66.4
Students with Limited English Proficiency	*	YES	62.8	68.9	*	YES	59.1	61
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	71.1	YES††	75.1	77.8	62.9	YES	66.8	68.4

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED, 2002-04	Target: 95%				ATTENDANCE RATE	Target: 90%			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE		THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
English Language Arts	98.6	YES	99.3	99.1		93	YES	93.6	94.8
Mathematics	99.6	YES	99.4	99.4					

TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL		
	TARGETS MET	TARGETS MISSED
English Language Arts Index Score	9	0
Mathematics Index Score	7	2
Percent Tested	2	0
Attendance Rate	1	0
THIS SCHOOL IS CLASSIFIED AS:		
School in Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress		

Information Works! data for Citizens' Memorial Elementary School is available at <http://www.rido.net>.

THE CITIZENS' MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Daniele Mallari
Grade 2 Teacher

Linda Barrette
Special Education Teacher

Ann Richards
Grade 2 Teacher

Sinaun Touch
ESL Teacher

Tracey Paskanik
Grade 3 Teacher

Renay Sawyer
Literacy Trainer

Diane Mayers
Grade 3 Teacher

Roxane Cary
Reading Specialist

Linda Griffin
Grade 3 Teacher

Debra Ferranti
Principal

Angela Holt
Grade 3 Teacher

Alaina Kayata
TIME Teacher

Meghann Sullivan
Grade 3 Teacher

Lisa Karmozyn
School Psychologist

Catherine Sullivan
Grade 4 Teacher

Det. Paul Seigny
Woonsocket Police Detective

Linda Bouley
Grade 4 Teacher

Wendy LePoirs
Parent

Erica Tanfani
Grade 4 Teacher

Maria Guerrera
Parent

Kim Dube
Grade 5 Teacher

Alexandria Egan
Student Senator

Amy Harvey
Grade 5 Teacher

Eunice Arty
Student Senator

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

Ruth S. Haynsworth
Grade 5 Teacher
Stony Lane Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island
To serve as Regents SALT Fellow
Team Chair

John DeDominici
Media Specialist
Community School
Cumberland, Rhode Island

Colleen Driscoll
Grade 2 ESL Teacher
Carl G. Lauro Elementary School
Providence, Rhode Island

Meggan Grassini
Grade 5 Inclusion Teacher
Francis J. Varieur Elementary School
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Kathleen Rhault
Grade 5 Teacher
Northern Lincoln Elementary School
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Christine Riley
Principal
Alan Shawn Feinstein @ Broad Street Elementary School
Providence, Rhode Island

Julie Slater
Grade 5 Teacher
Charles N. Fortes Academy
Providence, Rhode Island